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"BOOTS AND SADDLES."

The Cavalry of the Army of the Potomac.

CORPS ORGANIZATION.

Its Gallant Leaders, from Stoneman to Sheridan.

ITS BRILLIANT SERVICES.

During the Closing Struggles of the Great Rebellion.

BY BREVET BRIG.-GEN. MARCUS A. RENO.

The cavalry of the Army of the Potomac was never consolidated as a corps until Hooker assumed command in the Spring of 1863. The cavalry had served as separate regiments with the different army corps, with the exception of the regiments of the Regular Army. They were brigaded under the command of Gen. P. St. George Cooke, and accompanied Gen. McClellan to the Peninsula. The section of country was so limited that the cavalry had no field to operate in, although at the battle of Gaines's Mill a charge which has been compared to the charge of the "Light Brigade" at Balaklava, was made by the 5th U. S. Cav., supported by the 1st U. S. Cav. and the 6th Pa. (Rush's Lancers). A great deal of criticism has been indulged in as to this charge, and Gen. Cooke has been blamed in many quarters; but this charge saved a battery on our left and kept that flank from being turned until Sumner's Division had time to reach the field and enable us to hold our own until nightfall, which was all Gen. McClellan expected of Gen. Fitz-John Porter.

But our organization was so incomplete that the operations of the cavalry during the Antietam campaign were almost insignificant, so much so that at that time in our history it was a joke to offer a reward for a dead cavalryman. But time changed all this. After Gen. Hooker assumed command of the



ARMY OF THE POTOMAC THE CAVALRY WAS ORGANIZED AS A CORPS, AND GEN. STONEMAN ASSIGNED TO ITS COMMAND, WITH GEN. D. MCM. GREGG, AVERELL AND PLEASANTON AS DIVISION COMMANDERS.

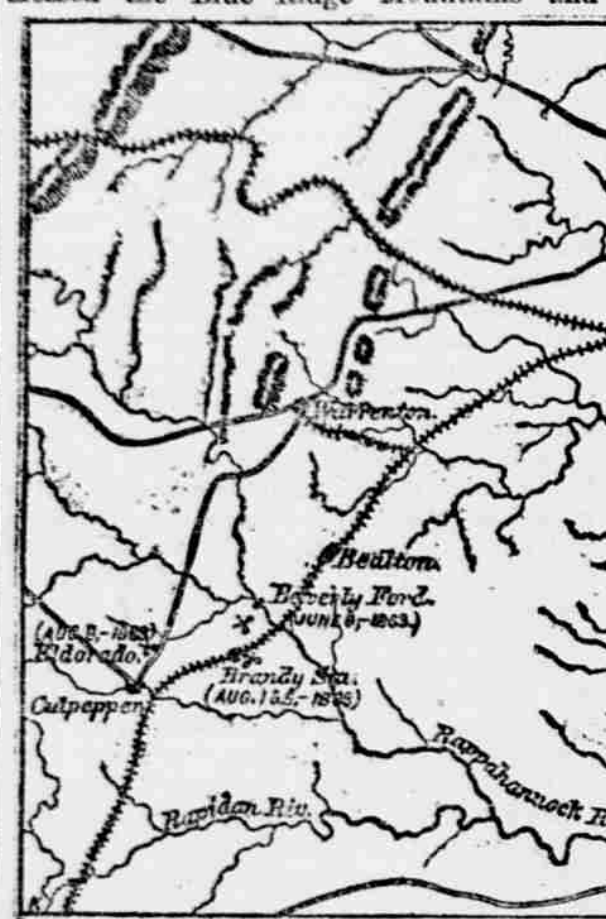
The regiments of the Regular Army remained as a brigade, called the Reserve Cavalry Brigade, commanded by Gen. Buford. At this time there were but six regiments of cavalry in the Regular Army, and the brigade was strengthened by the assignment of Rush's Lancers (6th Pa. Cav.) to it, and Gen. Buford always designated them as the 7th Regulars; and noble service they did to the end of the war. It was the most efficient organization of volunteer cavalry in the Army of the Potomac.

On the 13th of March, 1863, suspicions had reached Gen. Hooker that a move was contemplated by the rebel army, and Gen. Averell, with three brigades, was sent to investigate. We crossed the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, and had hardly established ourselves on the south bank, after a hard fight, when Fitz Lee, in command of the rebel cavalry, was heard from. He came with only cavalry, and so this was the first CAVALRY HAND-TO-HAND FIGHT of the war. We whipped them nicely, and after this our cavalry always had a "walk-over" when the rebel cavalry was not supported by the infantry. After the fight at Kelly's Ford we returned to Falmouth, where the Army of the Potomac was encamped, and after our return a raid by the cavalry was ordered by Gen. Hooker to the James River, with the object of severing the communications of Lee's army with Richmond; Gen. Averell with his division being sent to the west to strike Culpeper, and Pleasanton with his division to remain with the main army to assist at the battle of Chancellorsville, where he did good service.

The main portion of the cavalry, under Stoneman, made the raid to James River, but accomplished little, and we rejoined the Army of the Potomac, after great difficulty, owing to the hard rains that had prevailed, raising the Rappahannock to a depth that prohibited fording. We had not been long with the Army of the Potomac when Stoneman was relieved and sent to the West and Pleasanton succeeded to the command of the corps. He had been in command of the cavalry which took part in the battle of Chancellorsville. After he took command we remained quietly opposite Fredericksburg until Lee got ready for his second invasion of the loyal States, and then occurred the greatest cavalry fight of the war at Brandy Station. The cavalry, under the immediate command of Pleasanton, took up the line of march to determine if Lee intended to cross the Potomac, and as it happened we met the rebel cavalry under

Stuart, who had that morning passed his cavalry in review before Gen. Lee.

Hardly had we crossed the Rappahannock at Beverly Ford when we met the cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia. There were lively times for a few minutes, and just as we crossed the river the gallant B. F. Davis, of Mississippi, and who was Colonel of the 8th N. Y. Cav., was shot dead in a charge at the head of his regiment. As we made the crossing the country opened out into plains, and after a few hours of hard fighting we drove them from the field,



FIGHTS OF THE REGULAR BRIGADE IN 1863.

descended the valley of West Virginia en route to the ford of the Potomac at Williamsport.

I left the Army of the Potomac at this time because of a wound, and went on sick leave and was in Harrisburg, Pa., when Gen. W. F. ("Baldy") Smith was sent there to command the militia regiments organized to resist the invasion of Lee. Although still disabled, I reported to Gen. Smith, and was by him assigned to duty as Chief of his staff. I gave my experience in military matters to his assistance in organizing brigades and putting the militia in shape to meet the rebels. The cavalry of Early's Division, which was in the town of Carlisle, Pa., came to the brink of the Susquehanna River opposite Harrisburg.

Another division, under Ewell, was moving towards York, Pa., and after leaving tribute upon the city of York it moved on and destroyed the bridge across the Susquehanna at Wrightsville.

At Harrisburg, where I was, we called upon the citizens of that town to turn out and take their turn at digging in the trenches. A monument to their labor still exists on that hill, and is known as Fort Washington. At the call for volunteers the citizens responded cheerfully, and gladly worked under the direction of Capt. J. B. Wheeler, U. S. Engineers, and we soon had a strong line of intrenchments thrown up on the south side of the Susquehanna River. The rebels came up almost to our works, but did not attempt to storm them. After a faint attack they retired toward Gettysburg. Gen. Smith at once put at his command in pursuit, and we arrived in Carlisle, Pa., just in time to prevent the entrance into that village of Fitz Lee's cavalry. Gen. Early with his division in the meantime had evacuated Carlisle and fallen back toward Gettysburg. Fitz Lee's cavalry came near enough to burn the old barracks at Carlisle, which were first built by Hessian prisoners of the Revolutionary war. Just after my graduation at West Point I was sent to Carlisle Barracks for a short time to drill recruits. When I reported I found Fitz

Lee there, who had graduated the year before me. Your readers can imagine my feelings in seeing from the village where I was the flames arising from the very buildings Fitz Lee and I had occupied as quarters before the war.



FIGHTS OF THE REGULAR BRIGADE IN 1864.

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Of course the approach of the Army of the Potomac, the command of which had been transferred to Gen. Meade, caused a rapid retreat of the rebel forces, which were then raiding the southern Counties of Pennsylvania. I remained with the militia under Gen. Smith, and we marched up the Cumberland Valley to meet the Army of the Potomac. I have always thought that our march, without firing a gun,

had a decisive influence upon Gen. Lee, and his attack upon Gettysburg was hastened thereby. The militia joined the Army of

the Potomac just below Hagerstown, and after putting the men in camp I accompanied Gen. Smith to Gen. Meade's headquarters. There Gen. Smith had orders to go into camp on a small creek—I forgot the name, but it was on the right of the Army of the Potomac—and that a division of the Army of the Potomac would be sent to him to give the militia confidence, and he would be expected to watch Lee's army on that flank. The division reported to Gen. Smith. It was commanded by Gen. T. H. Neill, of Philadelphia. Being reinforced by this strong division, Gen. Smith immediately moved toward the rebels, and after a smart skirmish between the pickets, about dusk we went into camp.

I was very tired, and had been some time

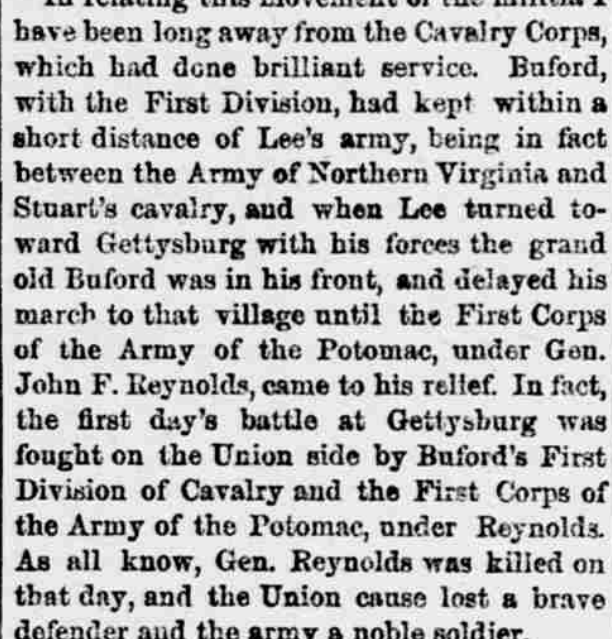
a hard fight, but kept its ground at the cross-roads until after dark. During the night of the day of this battle at order came to fall back to the main army. We had fought the evening of this night until dark, and the pickets of the rebels and our own were facing each other within rifle range. To withdraw under such circumstances was hazardous, but was successfully accomplished by Gen. Sheridan. We had made but a few miles on our march to join the Army of the Potomac when the corps received orders to reoccupy the ground we had held at Cold Harbor.

The corps was immediately turned about,

and reoccupied the ground held by us before our retreat, without the rebels being any the wiser. We reached our old position just before daylight, and well it was for the good of our cause that we were able to do so. At daylight the advance of the Army of Northern Virginia made its appearance on the cross-roads, and we must have been able, as it was of the first importance to the Army of the Potomac, because of having communication with the York River for supplies. Only the Cavalry Corps was there of the Union army, but the brave fellows held their ground against large odds until succor reached them from the infantry of the Army of the Potomac, which was the Sixth Corps, under Gen. Wright.

THE FEARFUL FIGHTING of the next two days for the name of Cold Harbor stood and known by the Union people of the North. After leaving Cold Harbor the Cavalry Corps led the Army of the Potomac to the James River, either clearing the way for it or giving it accurate and full reports of what it might be expected to meet. After the Army of the Potomac crossed to James River the Cavalry Corps was inactive for a few days as a corps, but those days were fully improved by rest to the men and feed to the horses, for now it was known that Gen. Grant intended to cut all means of transportation for supplies to Lee's army. Many unsuccessful attempts had been made to get the railroad south of Petersburg, but the railroad from the west, which passed through Gordonsville, Va., was yet undisturbed. This junction at Gordonsville being at some distance, it was impossible for infantry to go there, and the duty of cutting the road devolved upon the Cavalry Corps, which proved itself fully equal to the emergency under the lead of Gen. Sheridan.

How well I remember the night march



CROSSING AT BEVERLY FORD.

through the forces of Gen. Ben. Butler, who was at Bermuda Hundred. The march was made at night, so that we could cross the James River unknown to the enemy. Gen. Butler had had his men build small picket fires along the dark road we marched over, and which led through the dense places of that region. It was some time after daylight when we got across, but as soon as bridges and woods had been passed, we filed into the open plains that would give the mounted men a chance. It was inspiring to hear the brave fellows say to one another, through the ranks, "Now let 'em come, I can see for myself."

Our march was uninterrupted and uneventful until we neared a station on the road called Trevillian, and which we reached after a hard fight. As soon as information of the movement of the Cavalry Corps and the direction it had taken reached Gen. Lee, or Richmond, the rebel cavalry under Fitz Lee and Hampton was sent to prevent our cavalry from accomplishing the destruction of the railroad, and a strong division of infantry, under Breckinridge, was sent by rail. Our road was to the right and north of the road the rebel cavalry was following until we reached a point where the two roads joined, not far from Trevillian, and near to a farmhouse known to us as Buckchild's. Suspicions were entertained by us that the rebels were near, and Gen. Custer was sent with his brigade to scout the Louisa Court-house road for information. He struck the road between the two divisions of Fitz Lee and Hampton, and, of course, with a division of cavalry on his left and one on his right, he had a tough time of it. Custer came out with credit, although he lost two of the guns of Pennington's battery. Gen. Sheridan now knew he had



A STRONG FORCE TO DEAL WITH.

but not discouraged, he resumed his march to the railroad. On nearing the station at Trevillian it was found that the rebels had formed a line in front of the station to protect the railroad. The First Division, under Gen. Torbert, opened the fight with the brigade of Custer on the Louisa Court-house road, which, by the way, ran through the little station of Trevillian. Custer soon developed a strong force, and the Reserve Brigade, under Gen. Merritt, was sent to attack on the left of the rebel line.

In the Reserve Brigade was the horse battery of the 3d Art., commanded by Capt. Williston. This brigade had a hard fight to hold its own, and late in the afternoon of the 11th of June I was sent by the General to get information from it. I can say it was a hot place. Reaching the line I asked for Merritt, and was told at his headquarters that he was with Williston. I galloped there with all haste, and found but two guns. The men from the other guns had all been killed or wounded, and I found Merritt, wearing the uniform coat of a Brigadier-General, aiding

him to load and firing the single gun of the battery that was serviceable. None had been captured, however. This one gun had a flank fire upon Breckinridge's infantry, and saved Custer and the day. The fire of this gun made itself felt, and I was ordered to carry an order to Custer to advance. He had not much trouble in doing so, and the railroad was in our possession. Some time was spent in destroying it, and after nightfall we returned to the Army of the Potomac.

During our return march we followed our own road until we neared Spottsylvania Court-house, passing through the battlefields of those days which were so hard fought. I remember as we returned from Trevillian that we could see the dust of the columns of Fitz Lee and Hampton moving on a road parallel to ours, but we did not want to fight them and did not disturb them, as nothing

was to be gained. The Cavalry Corps pur-

sued its peaceful way to the bridge across York River, near White House, in Virginia. At this point many transports of the Union army had arrived to carry supplies left there up the James River to the Army of the Potomac. The rebel cavalry tried to reach this point ahead of us, but did not succeed, although we had marched farther than they had. On this day I saw for the first time

COLORED TROOPS IN ACTION.

They were on board the transports, under command of Gen. Abernethy, who sent them out to meet the rebel cavalry. We arrived just after they had started out. As we proceeded up the road we came across some of their wounded and stragglers. Being on staff duty I was riding alone to the front, when I met on my way one of the colored men who had been hit. I asked him what was the matter, and he replied at once: "Fore God, dis darkey am gone." I think he rather exaggerated his injuries, for a few days in the hospital enabled him to rejoin his regiment, which formed part of the colored division commanded by Gen. Ferrero. After taking care of all at this landing, and sending the transports to City Point, we resumed our march across the Peninsula to the Army of the Potomac.

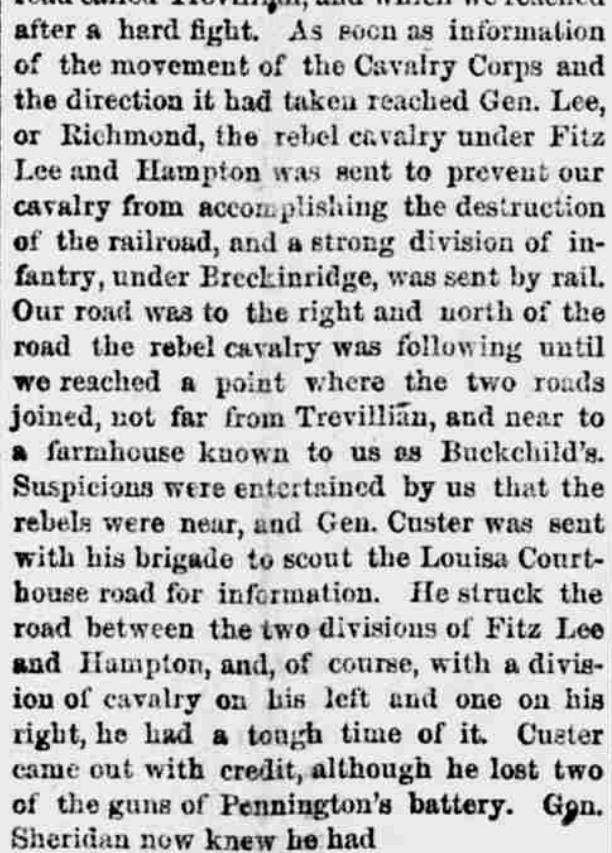
We reached the south bank of the James



CROSSING AT BEVERLY FORD.

on the day of the explosion of Burnside's mine, moved along the rear of the Army of the Potomac lines to the extreme left, and made our camp in the near vicinity of a point known to us as Lee's Mills. The weather was intensely hot, and after a short delay here we encamped at Jordan's Point, on the James River, a few miles below City Point. From this camp we started for the Valley of the Shenandoah, leaving behind the gallant Second Division, under Gen. D. McM. Gregg. As Inspector-General of the First Division I was assigned the duty of superintending the shipment of the men and horses of that division, and no slight job did I find it to be. I got through with it and reached Washington just after Gen. Sheridan had left for Harper's Ferry.

Before leaving the Army of the Potomac,



DISMOUNTED CAVALRY SKIRMISHING.

The Cavalry Corps was made part of an expedition to the north side of the James River. The Second Corps, under Gen. Hancock, made the rest of the force, all under the command of Sheridan. We crossed the James and were soon hotly engaged with some troops of the Army of Northern Virginia, which resulted in the defeat of the rebels and the capture of two guns of a battery they had brought too near the river. We fell back that night, and with this move was connected an incident of a personal nature, which will illustrate the confidence of Sheridan in his staff, and his staff in him. Fred Newhall, of Philadelphia, a Captain of the Rush Lancers at the breaking out of the war, was Inspector-General for Sheridan, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. On the evening in question, as we were about crossing to the south side of the James River, Sheridan said to Newhall:

"Are you satisfied all the pickets have been called in?"

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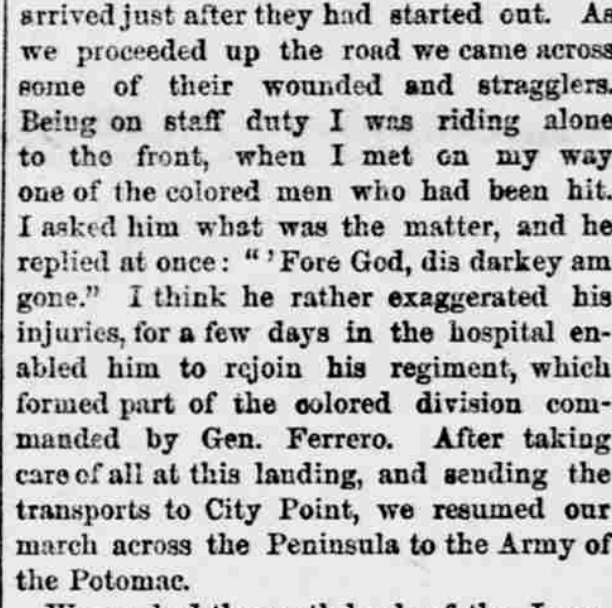


TEARING UP THE RAILROAD AT TREVILLIAN.

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CEDAR MOUNTAIN.

The Strength of the Union and Confederate Armies.

CRAWFORD'S BRIGADE.

How It Met the Fire of Overwhelming Odds.

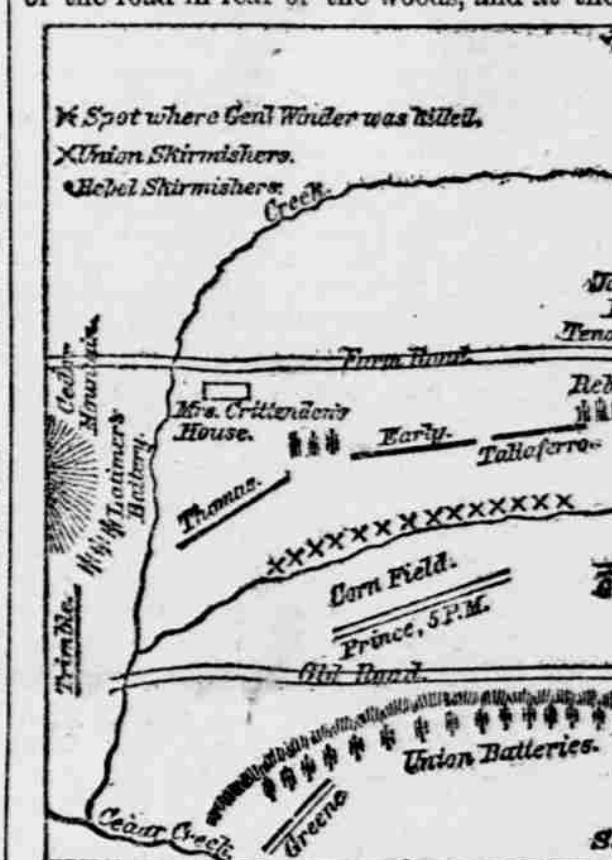
A GALLANT FIGHT.

Graphic Picture of the Struggle Through Field and Wood.

BY H. A. TRIPP, CO. F, 10TH ME., BLUE HILL, ME.

II.

It is past 4 o'clock on that hot August afternoon when Crawford's two regiments on the left of the road are moved to the right of the road, where the other regiments are. Our line is formed with Crawford's Brigade on the right of the road, in rear of the woods behind the wheatfield. He has four regiments—46th Pa., Col. Jos. F. Knipe, 23 officers, 451 men, on the right; 28th N. Y., Col. Dudley Donnelly, 18 officers, 339 men; 5th Conn., Col. Geo. D. Chapman, 21 officers, 424 men; 10th Me., Col. Geo. L. Beal, 26 officers, 435 men; making a total effective strength present in the brigade of 88 officers and 1,679 men. Two companies of the 5th Conn. and one company of the 28th N. Y. were detached for other duty on that day. Just at the edge of the road in rear of the woods, and at the



BATTLEFIELD OF CEDAR MOUNTAIN.

left of Crawford, is Lieut. Muhlenberg with four pieces of artillery—12-pounder Napoleons.

Gordon's (Third) Brigade of Williams's Division is on the hill before mentioned, 1,200 yards from the road, and about a mile from Crawford. Gordon has with him Cothran's battery (M. 1st N. Y. L. A.) of three-inch rifles, and three regiments of infantry—the 2d Mass., Col. Andrews; 3d Wis., Col. Ruger, and 27th Ind., Col. Colgrove—and one company of "Zouaves," Capt. Collis, attached to the 3d Mass. Gordon has

LESS THAN 1,500 MEN,

exclusive of artillery, and holds the extreme right of the Union line. Between him and Crawford is nearly a mile of thick woods, hill and valley, and Cedar Run. He sends skirmishers from the 27th Ind. to his right, while six companies of the 3d Wis., under Col. Ruger, are put as skirmishers in the space between him and Crawford, whose skirmishers are in the belt of wood behind the wheatfield, concealed from the enemy's sight. On the left of the road are Roemer's and Knapp's batteries and a section of Best's, under Lieut. Cushing; the 4th Me. battery, Capt. Robinson, and 6th Me. battery, the latter commanded by Capt. (afterward Colonel) Freeman McGilvery; the whole under charge of Capt. C. L. Best, 4th U. S. Art., Chief of Artillery on Gen. Banks's staff.

Gen. Angur's (Second) Division is on the left of the road also. He has three brigades. The First, Brig.-Gen. John W. Geary, has the 5th Ohio, Col. Patrick; 7th Ohio, Col. Creighton; 29th Ohio, Capt. Stevens, and 66th Ohio, Col. Candy—total, enlisted men, including Knapp's battery, 1,121. The Second Brigade, Brig.-Gen. Henry Prince commanding, is composed of a battalion of the 8th and 12th Regulars, Capt. Pitcher; 102d N. Y., Maj. Lane; 109th Pa., Col. Stainbrook; 111th Pa., Maj. Walker; 3d Md., Col. De Witt, and 4th Me. battery—total enlisted men, 1,435. The Third Brigade, Brig.-Gen. George S. Greene, has the 78th N. Y., a battalion of District of Columbia volunteers, and the 6th Me. battery—457 enlisted men;—total enlisted men of the Second Division present, 3,013. Estimated 29 officers for each regiment and battalion and five for each battery, which is a liberal estimate, and we have 235 officers, which gives a grand total of 3,248 officers and men in that division. There are also present in the field, belonging to the First Division, the batteries of Best, Cothran and Roemer, not included in the returns of that division. Calling the strength of these batteries 100 officers and men each would give Banks 6,815 officers and men of infantry and artillery present at Cedar Mountain, and over 1,200 cavalry, or 8,000 men of all arms.

THE CONFEDERATE STRENGTH. How with the Confederates? Stonewall Jackson is in command. His leading division (Ewell's) has three brigades. Early has in his brigade the 12th Ga., 13th, 25th, 31st, 44th, 52d and 58th Va.; but the 4th Va. and six companies of the 52d Va., numbering about 350 men, were left on picket in the morning and were not in the fight, which makes his effective strength present about 1,350.

Trimble has in his brigade the 15th Ala.,

and in Hays's Legion, now commanded by Col. Farnes, are the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th La. The effective strength of this division on the morning of this day is given by Gen. Early as, infantry—officers, 333; men, 4,368; artillery—officers, 10; men, 236. Total—officers, 343; men, 4,594, making a grand total of 4,937.

Jackson's own division, under command of Gen. C. S. Winder, (a West Point graduate,) is also composed of three brigades. The leading brigade (Campbell's), now commanded by Lieut.-Col. Garnett, of the 42d Va., is composed of the 21st, 42d, 43d Va., and the 1st Va. (or Irish) battalion, and is posted in the woods fronting the wheatfield and on the left of the Culpeper road. The 21st Va. (Lieut.-Col. Cunningham), and part of the 42d Va. (Capt. Hannum) are facing the road, and somewhat to the west of the cornfield, to protect their batteries, while the rest of the 42d Va., with the 42d Va. and Irish battalion, are nearly at right angles with the road, facing the wheatfield. Stonewall Jackson, thinking the line not strong enough, directs Col. Garnett to call on Gen. Taliaferro for reinforcements, and subsequently the 10th Va. (Maj. Stover) was detached from the Third (Taliaferro's) Brigade and placed on the left of the Irish battalion, on the extreme left of their line of battle. Taliaferro's Brigade consists of the 23d Va., Lieut.-Col. Walton; 37th Va., Col. Williams; 47th Ala., Lieut.-Col. Jackson, and 48th Ala., Col. Sheffield. The brigade is at first in line parallel with the road, but is afterwards posted on Early's left, closing the gap between him and the road. The "Stonewall" Brigade, Col. Ronald, of the 4th Va., has the 3d Va., Lieut.-Col. Botts; 4th Va., Lieut.-Col. Gardner; 5th Va., Maj. Williams; 27th Va., Capt. Haynes, and 33d Va., Lieut.-Col. Lee. It is supporting the brigade of Garnett, several hundred

yards in its rear, and beyond the small field before spoken of. Early is

CALLING FOR REINFORCEMENTS,

and, as soon as the leading brigade of Hill's Division arrives (probably between 4:30 and 5 p. m.), it is sent to Early. It is composed of the 14th, 35th, 45th and 49th Ga. and 3d La. battalion, commanded by Gen. Thomas, and is posted by Early on his right, at right angles with the 12th Ga., which is thrown to the left along a ridge, which makes a curve in front, affording a good natural position, and enabling it to give a flank fire on troops in the cornfield.

The rebel artillery has a good position, Latimer's battery is on the slope of the mountain, near Trimble's position, and ultimately drives Muhlenberg from his position by the road. Brown and Dement, six guns, are on Early's right, while there are four guns in the road; and about 350 yards to their right and front are four rifles and one 12-pounder Napoleon. As soon as A. R. Hill's artillery arrives four rifled guns are posted still further to their right.

It is now past 5 o'clock. The rebel forces

on the field are posted from left to right as follows: Garnett's Brigade on the left of the road, then Taliaferro's, Early's, Thomas's and Trimble's Brigades, with Ronald in reserve in rear of Garnett, and Hays's Brigade in reserve near Trimble, while A. P. Hill's Light Division is fast coming up to support them as may be needed. Hill has six brigades with him, one (Thomas's) being already in position.

On the Union side Crawford holds the right, opposite Garnett, while Geary and Prince are on the left of the road in front of Taliaferro, Early and Thomas, and Greene is away on our extreme left, supporting with his fragment of a brigade Capt. McGilvery's 6th Me. battery. Geary forms next to the road in two lines, the 7th Ohio on the right of the front line, with the 29th Ohio supporting it, about 50 yards in rear. The 66th Ohio is to the left of the 7th, supported by the 5th Ohio. Prince, on Geary's left, has the 111th Pa. on the right of his advance line, supported by the 100th Pa. The 3d Md. has the left of his front line, supported by the 102d N. Y. The battalion of Regulars is deployed as skirmishers in the cornfield, the corn being nearly as high as the head of a mounted man.

HEAVY ARTILLERY FIRING has been going on for some time, and Geary and Prince move forward through the cornfield, and soon the skirmishers are at work. Crawford's and Gordon's men are completely sheltered and hidden. The movement of Geary and Prince induces the enemy to think they are preparing to charge on their artillery, and the brigades of Thomas, Early, and Taliaferro, on our left of the road, and the 21st Va. and 48th Va., of Garnett's Brigade, on the right of the road, are engaged in making it warm for Angur's men, and protecting their batteries.

It is now determined by Gen. Banks to charge from our right upon the enemy's battery in the road, and Gen. Crawford is ordered to take his command to the right and make the charge, to be supported by Gordon's Brigade. At this time the 10th Me., of Crawford's Brigade, is supporting Best's

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